A

Second Letter

TO A

DISSENTER,

Upon Occaſion of

His Majeſty's late *Gracious Declaration* of INDULGENCE.

WE are ſubject to nothing more than forgetfulneſs of Bleſſings, unthankfulueſs for Mercies, or to abuſe or miſuſe them. When *Iſrael* was delivered from *Egyptian* Slavery, they ſang God's Praiſe, but ſoon forgot his great Goodneſs to them; in their diſtreſs they cried unto God, but when he delivered them from their Oppreſſors and Oppreſſions, they kicked againſt him; when beyond their Faith or Hope they were freed from their Captive-ſtate in *Babylon*, moſt of them contemned that Mercy, and choſe to continue under Servitude, and only a few embraced that Liberty. I hope none of you will be found to imitate them in that ungrateful Obſtinacy.

That the Obligations God by his merciful Providence of the like kind hath laid upon you, and the Sence thereof, and of the Bleſſing you have received by His Majeſty's moſt Gracious Declaration, may remain upon you, and that you may conſider what your Sufferings were, and what you are delivered from, this ſeaſonable Advice is given to you, by one of your own Number, that now is, and for about forty years hath been, a Member of a Congregational Church, and purpoſeth ſo to continue unto his Death.

Your Deliverance was from the Jaws of *Deſtruction*; you are brought from *Slavery* to a ſtate of *Liberty*; the Shackles of Conſcience, and Bolts of your Priſons are knocked off, and you left to worſhip God in Truth without Fear; your Houſes are no more rifled, nor your Goods plundered, ſeized or ſold; nor your Perſons, Wives, Children, Relations and Friends crowded into naſty Gaols, on the Perjuries and falſe Informations of the Dregs of the People, ſuch who by Debaucheries violated all Bonds of Conſcience, and whoſe Trade it was to ſpoil you; Men as compaſſionate as Ravenous Wolves, to whoſe inſatiate Avarice there were no bounds.

You were not ſuffered to plead your own Cauſe (the *Preſs* being ſhut againſt you) a Favour Heathens always allowed: you were forced to bear all Injuries, though innocent: If you *complained*, it increaſed your puniſhment; if *ſilent*, you were ſullen, condemned, fined and impriſoned, without being heard, or knowing your Accuſers, and that too many times for ſuppoſed Crimes you were not guilty of; ruined, baniſhed and deſtroyed, becauſe you were unwilling to be damned for violating your Conſciences: your worſhipping of God, as you judged, according to his own appointment, was accounted a greater Iniquity than Adultery, Perjury, Atheiſm, or Blaſphemy. Theſe

were eaſily expiated; but no Atonement for *Non-conformity*, or for not coming to Church, though in many Pariſhes in and about *London*, the Churches would not hold one third part of the Pariſhioners.

Theſe Proceedings were accounted *Legal*, and your not conforming reckoned *Obſtinacy*, and ſuch as deſerved no pity; nothing would evince the contrary, or that *Conſcience* was concerned therein, loſs of all the Comforts of this Life would not do it, and further Evidence you could not give.

This was your State and Condition, as to your Sufferings and Perſecutions, from which your Deliverance was extraordinary and unexpected; whereby you are at once engaged under many Obligations, which, if you fail to anſwer, will lie as a Brand of Infamy upon you.

1. You are therefore to bleſs and adore God for this His great goodneſs and deliverance, the effect only of his merciful Bounty, to whom the Praiſe is due, and to be expreſt in a godly, peaceable, meek, circumſpect, humble and fruitful converſation. That will bring Glory, not only to his Name and Truth, but alſo to your Profeſſion, and eſtabliſh in the Conſciences of your Oppreſſors a Conviction, That without any Cauſe they unjuſtly perſecuted you; be not therefore wanting herein, leſt you provoke the Lord thereby again to take this Bleſſing from you.

2. Thankfully to acknowledge the King's Benignity and Compaſſion; his Grace was free, and that too after many great provocations; nor were there wanting thoſe that ſo miſrepreſented His Majeſty (which you too readily credited) as if he had been another *Nero* or *Caligula*, that nothing but Blood and Cruelty was in his Nature, and deſigned by him; and at the ſame time you were repreſented as his moſt Implacable and irreconcileable Enemies, dreſt up in Bears Skins to be baited; and yet under theſe Circumſtances, without Petition or Intreaty, of His own innate Goodneſs and Clemency, he both pardoned and freed you from mercileſs Oppreſſors, and from thoſe cruel Laws, the Engines made uſe to debauch your Conſciences, deprive you of your Communion with God, and to make your Lives bitter; a more ſeaſonable Mercy could not be given; and if you are wanting in Thankfulneſs, Love and Subjection to His Majeſty, you will juſtly be branded as the moſt ungrateful and perfidious.

3. 'Tis incumbent on you alſo as Men and Chriſtians, to uſe your utmoſt Endeavours by all lawful Ways and Means to extirpate all thoſe *Laws* and *Teſts* that deprive you of this Freedom, or lay any Reſtraint on Conſcience in Matters of Religion, you accounted it your Duty (as *Daniel* did) to break theſe Laws, when their keeneſt Edge was turned againſt you, judging it better to obey *God* than *Men*; and ſhall there now be the leaſt heſitation in your Minds, as to the vacating of them? Can you deſire again to be in bondage, even whilſt your Wounds are bleeding freſh, and your Backs ſore with the Laſhes you received from them? Will not all men brand your Folly, that when you have an opportunity to be free, and nothing but your own remiſs Inadvertency can continue or renew your Bondage, you ſhould be wanting to your ſelves herein? Who will then pity you if your Bonds are again repeated? And can you expect otherwiſe, ſo long as theſe *Laws* and *Teſts* are in force, for they have not left their *Sting*, nor your Perſecutors their *Malice*, *Prejudice* and *Revenge*? Are they not the Children of their Fathers, that formerly drove Thouſands into the *American Wilderneſs* for their Conſciences? Are your ſufferings the firſt Perſecution by theſe Laws? What then means the many *Petitions* and *Apologies* againſt them, made by Diſſenters in each King's Reign ſince they were firſt Enacted? Were there no Miniſters Silenced, nor Perſons Executed, Baniſhed or Impriſoned before your days? And if ſo, by what Laws? And who were the Authors or Actors therein? And will you ſuppoſe they will do ſo no more? And that too when thoſe very men, whoſe Pleaſure was in your Ruine, do ſtill rage like a Bear bereaved of her Whelps, and curſe you with bitter Execrations, becauſe reſtrained from their Cruelty, and deprived of their Felicity, which with their Debauchery, iſſued in your Deſtruction; whoſe Wrath is ſo boiled into *Envy*, that they cannot forbear

bear their Threats, but ſet their Tongues on Miſcheif, even to the moſt undecent Expreſſions of His Majeſty Himſelf, for His Fatherly Compaſſions to you.

4. Conſider, That when His Majeſty's Declaration of Indulgence could no longer be prevented, but was publiſhed, how many Stratagems and Contrivances were uſed, and Endeavours to deprive you of the Bleſſing and Mercy thereof: Thoſe that firſt Addreſt His Majeſty with Thanks for His Grace and Clemency therein, were (to deter others from the like) ſtigmatized as the unworthieſt of Men, Betrayers of the Liberties of the Nation; as if to accept Liberty on the King's Declaration, was to deſtroy all Law and Property at once, when yet nothing was done therein but what all Ages have recognized as His Majeſty's moſt undoubted Right (which alſo in a little time will beyond contradiction be made moſt apparent) as to His Power in *Diſpenſing* with all theſe *Laws* and *Teſts*.

When theſe Endeavours failed, and many followed that good Example of *Addreſſing* His Majeſty with Thanks for His Declaration, and openly met in their Congregations to bleſs God for their Liberty, and Worſhipped him according to their Conſciences; Praying moſt heartily for all Bleſſings for His Majeſty; then it was more than whiſpered, That there were *Snakes in the Graſs*; this Indulgence would be like the Morning-dew; it was but a *Scaffold*, to be taken down ſo ſoon as the Building of Popery was erected. The provoked Church of *England* would turn their *Rods* into Scorpions to all that accepted this Liberty, of whom *Liſts* were taken: That it was not their Diſpoſition to *Perſecute*; but they were neceſſitated thereunto, to comply with the *Government*, and ſo could not *help* it; That they would do ſo no more; That it was not ſafe to take away the *Penal Laws* and *Teſts*; for thereby the *Papiſts* would be let into Parliament, and would make what Laws they pleaſed to ruine the Church of *England*, the Bulwark of the Proteſtant Religion; That thoſe Reſtraints and Penalties being removed, a great part of the Nation would turn *Roman Catholicks*, and would ſerve in all Employments with Impunity, and Idolaters would be tolerated, *&c.*

For propagating theſe Jealouſies, ſpecious and invective Reaſons were drawn up and diſperſed; with a Report, that Prieſts and Jeſuits Preached in your Meetings (without inſtancing *where* or *when*, or the Names of ſuch Preachers;) ſuppoſing theſe Endeavours might again be ſucceſsful, as they had been in preventing the Diſſenters Petitioning His Majeſty for their Liberty; and in King *Charles* the IId's time, to the rejecting His Declaration of Indulgence; which gave Him ſuch provocation, as that it became an occaſion of His withdrawing his Tenderneſs and Clemency to Diſſenters, in that they were not true and ſteady to their Intereſt, and not to be truſted, but conſented to be as a *Cat's Paw*, to gratifie the Humor and Deſigns of thoſe that ſought their Ruine.

5. All theſe Suggeſtions, Inſinuations and Aſperſions are manifeſtly groundleſs and abſurd; for if theſe *Laws* and *Teſts* be taken away, What then can abridge your Liberties? Men may (as you muſt expect they will) be *angry*, but they cannot *hurt* you: The Snake in the Graſs, *viz.* A Spirit of Perſecution, may *Hiſs*, but not *Bite*. The Building will endure and ſtand as firm as a Rock, and the Proteſtant Religion not ſhaken; all (but ſuch as delight in Miſchief and Oppreſſion) will rejoyce: See the Bleſſing and Benefit of Liberty of Conſcience! The Peace and Concord, the Increaſe of Trade, and Proſperity to the whole Nation: That the Foundation of the Government it ſelf will as ſoon be ſhaken, as your Liberty infringed; ſo that you need not fear the Rage of any, or their Threats of Scorpions.

What danger can there be of *Papiſts*, or any other in Parliament, when all Intereſts will be engaged againſt ſuch as ſhall attempt to invade this Liberty? Beſides, who ſhall Elect ſuch great number of *Papiſts*, and where will they be Choſen? If it be ſuppoſed, that they may ſit by undue Returns; that may alſo be prevented by the very Act of Parliament that repeals thoſe *Teſts* and *Penal Statutes*, and ſuch Security provided for therein, as that it ſhall not be in the power of any to infringe the Liberties of the Nation, or any ſort of People therein; and that too by more juſtifiable and ſafer me-

thods than those *Tests* and *Penal Statutes* that have been the Burthen and Oppression of the Nation; shutting out of Parliament and all Places of Trust, not only the *Papists*, but also *all Others*, which are not a few, that cannot conform to the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*; and is it your Interest to be shut out of all Trusts, and rendered *useless* (however otherwise qualified) or that all *Honours*, *Places* and *Profits* should be distributed only amongst one sort of Men, many of whom have been your Oppressors, and are not a little provoked at your Liberty, and such as please themselves with the hopes of Revenge?

The Allegation, That their Persecuting was to comply with the Government, that they could not help it, is manifestly absurd, to all that knew His late Majesties Temper; who did he brow-beat for his Clemency? Was he passive? 'Twas to please the Men of the Church of *England*. Did he at any time give Directions for it? 'Twas at the pressing instance of their many-repeated irritating Addresses, and false Representations made of the Dissenters. And His present Majesty, on His first Access to His Government, proposed the Indulgence granted by His Gracious Declaration, in which He was opposed by the Men of that Perswasion and Practice: However, they were not necessitated thereunto, but acted therein freely, either out of Principle, or against Conscience; and in neither Case are they again to be trusted: for the same Men will re-act the same thing on the like occasion, if those Laws and Tests continue in force.

6. That Liberty of Conscience should bring in *Popery*, is a Paradox not to be understood by any thinking man. If Popery be the effect of preaching the Gospel, let Popery come in; and if the Learning and Piety of the Church of *England*, with their Dignities, Honours, Livings and Fat of the Land, will not preserve it, and maintain those Bulwarks, without *Tests* and *Penal Statutes*, her Canons of Cruelty and Destruction, domineering over other mens Consciences, and enslaving the Nation to their Pride and Avarice, let that Church fall, and no more pretend to be such an impregnable Fortress.

7. That the *Papists* should be so increased by taking away the *Tests* and *Penalties* of the Law in Matters of Religion, is not very probable, since hope of Preferment, and the Princes Favour, doth not now so prevail with many, though Men of that Perswasion serve in their Employments with Impunity; but if it should have such effect, yet the Church of *England* are no Losers, since thereby they are only freed of such as would never be serviceable to them nor their Interest, and at best but *deceitful Friends*, a noxious Humor in the Body, fit to be purged out.

8. By tolerating *Idolaters*, I suppose is intended the *Roman Catholicks*, who now dwell amongst us, have *by Law* equal Right with others to Protection and their Birth-rights, bound by common Interest, as *Englishmen*, to desire, wish and endeavour the Welfare of the Nation; and after all this, must their Throats be cut, or they banished, because of their different Sentiments in Matters of Religion? Will not such Usage justifie the Persecution of *Protestants* in other Countries, since there is no more difference betwixt a *Papist* and a *Protestant*, than there is betwixt a *Protestant* and a *Papist*? We cannot here practice and justifie it our selves, and yet condemn the same thing as wicked and cruel in others; nor can any suppose any Popish Opinion worse than the *Jews* Execrations and Blasphemies of our Saviour, and yet there's no scruple of tolerating *Them*: They are at worst but *Tares*, and by Christ's Directions, such as are to grow *with the Wheat* until the Harvest; besides, it's the *Angels*, not *Men*, that must weed them out.

9. Be true therefore to your own Interest; spare neither Root nor Branch of those *Tests* nor *Penal Statutes*; they are, and always have been Snares, in which only conscientious men, such as scrupled Impositions and humane Inventions in the Worship of God, have been catched; when *Atheists*, and men of debauched Consciences, have not been bound by them. The Uniformity in Religion inforced by them, hath ruined many *Thousands*. Let them do no more such Mischief, since the Church of Christ needs no such Auxiliaries for its Preservation; and *Truth* is stronger than *Error*, without such coertion:

coertion: Therefore let not designing Surmises and Insinuations of Dangers, where there are none, amuse your *Heads*, nor *weaken your Hands*. Remember, that had *Nehemiah* been discouraged by the like *Threats* and *Surmises* of *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*, he had never freed the *Jews* from their Oppression, nor provided for their Safety, by finishing his Building of the Walks and City of *Jerusalem*.

There remains one Suggestion more, which is commonly press'd as unanswerable, *viz.* That considering the King's Principles, 'tis Folly to suppose He granted His Indulgence to Dissenters out of Kindness, 'twas only to make Tools of them; nor can they trust His Word, since 'tis a Maxim amongst the *Roman Catholicks*, That Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks; and such they account all *Protestants* and *Dissenters*.

This will require a more distinct Answer than was given to any other Suggestion; and therefore I shall be more particular therein.

Admitting this to be the Case, yet His Majesty's Indulgence is such a Blessing, as calls for Thankfulness to God and to the King; for thereby you have your present Liberty and Freedom from all the Slavery and Oppression before-mentioned: A Reprieve to a condemned Man, present Ease from acute Pains of Stone or Gout, are Mercies for which men are thankful to God, and the Instrument by which they obtain such Favors and Blessings (and surely your Liberty is not of less value.) Will a condemned Man reject his Reprieve, because it is not yet a full Pardon? Or any one a present Relief, on supposition that the Stone or the Gout may twelve Months after return upon him? This is the worst that can be imagin'd of your Case, as to your present Liberty.

But suppose His Majesty granted this Indulgence out of Design, and not out of Love to you, yet your Condition thereby is not worse than it was; you are sure, by woful experience, that your Persecutors hated you, and causlessly sought your Ruine, the other can do no more; or is it less grievous to be ruined by cruel merciless Protestant Persecuters, than 'tis by Papists? Nor is this Suggestion made out of Kindness or Friendship, but of Hatred, Mischief and Design, *viz.* That since they can no longer turn the edge of those Penal Laws against you to your Ruine, they create Fears and Jealousies, to the end that thereby you may become so useless and ungrateful, as to turn the King's Favour into Displeasure; and if this can be done, they have gained their Point effectually, with an opportunity, according to their Threats, to turn their Rods into Scorpions.

Do not too easily credit this Suggestion, yet make a good and profitable use of it; make the best construction, and take it as real, and carry it to His Majesty accordingly: be not wanting in your Thankfulness, Love and dutiful Subjection and Obedience to him, that so His Majesty may have a full satisfaction that His Favours are not bestowed on an ungrateful and obstinate People. And let this Suggestion become an Incitation to more Circumspection: Hereby you will disapoint the Designs of your Enemies, and so prevail on His Majesty, that if it could be supposed that He was not yet real to you, He would become so; for He is not impenetrable, nor is He uncapable of understanding His own Interest: and if He finds you men useful and serviceable to a common Interest, and fit to be trusted, you need not fear being made Tools of.

But since the Suggestion is made, if there's any Truth therein, it becomes absolutely necessary, according to the Advice already given, to take your first opportunity to root out those Penal Statutes and Tests; that so they may be no more the Instruments of Destruction, either in the Hand of the King, or any other that desires your Ruine; until then, you are ruined by Law; and your Persecuters justified therein; but when these Laws and Tests are abrogated, they will be as cautious therein, as they are in the breach of any other Law, as to Theft or Murder. So that your Security and Liberty is to be established in and by the vacating these Laws and Tests.

For that Part of the Suggestion, That there's no Trust to be put in the King's Word, since Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks: You have much more than His Majesty's bare Word for your Liberty: Hath he not by His Declaration removed your Fears, and to His own satisfaction, thereby erected His Throne in your Hearts? What else

means

means His Gracious Acceptance of the many Addresses of Thanks presented to Him for His Gracious Declaration; and His Condescending, Obliging and Gracious Answers thereunto? His dismissing out of His Service (how useful soever) such as would not by any means be reconciled thereunto, and trusting and employing those that are Establishing by Law, this Liberty; and encouraging all to concur with Him therein; he desires and designs you should not only have His Word, but a *Magna Charta* for Security of Liberty of Conscience, as well as you have for your Properties.

If His Majesty did not intend as real and as high a Security for your Liberty as he can give, He hath acted most impolitickly: What need was there then of publishing, in His Declaration, the Grounds and Reasons on which He granted His Indulgence? Which are so weighty, and such as will abide the severest Test. Hath He not thereby exposed Himself, His Honour and Glory, to the Highest Censure and Obloquy, both at home and in all Nations, if He violates His Word? Hath he not laid the greatest Obligations on Himself, to assure the whole World, that He will be true and steady thereunto? What need else was there of publishing those Reasons, since a bare Indulgence without them, might have served a Turn? Or what Reason is there for His frequent solemn Promises to make it good? Why else is it a pleasing and delightful Subject to Him to be commonly talking and discoursing of, and of the Benefits and Blessings that will accrue thereby to the Nation? These things, if not real, are inconsistent with a Prudent, Politick Prince, and below the common Sentiments of an ordinary Man.

Before we can imagine His Majesty is not fully resolved to make good His Declaration, we must suppose Him to be a man that hath no Zeal for, nor Sence of His Religion, nor for the Men of His own Persuasion: And this cannot be supposed by any that knows him, and how constant He is at His Devotions, and how He adventured three Kingdoms for His Religion, when Wind and Tide ran most violently against Him: Would He but have dissembled His Religion, or quitted it or His Party, He might have been the Darling of those Times; but he chose to run the greatest Risks and Dangers, rather than not to appear what he was. And shall we, after this, imagine he will have no regard to His Word, nor provide for the Safety of His Party, which else, so soon as He dies, must be exposed to the uttermost Ruine, and to the Rage and Fury of these Laws and Tests.

We have also, besides His Majesties Word, the highest Security He can give for our Liberties, we have not only the Particulars before-mentioned, but also with His Word, we have His Interest, which will not lie: So that if His Word were of no Force, yet he is bound by Interest to make it good. Doth not His Majesty know, that the Dissenters are not a sort of treacherous, cowardly Men? Where's the Instance that any of them ever betrayed their Trust, or refused any Service they undertook, or were called unto, how perilous soever? Are they Drones that live by the Sweat of other mens Brows; or rather, are they not painful and industrious, addicted to Trade and Manufactories? Is not a great part of the Trade of the Nation managed by them, whereby the Poor are employed, His Majesties Customs and Revenues increased? Nor are they an inconsiderable Number of His Majesty's Subjects; so that to part with them, He must part with a great part of His Strength and Treasure, in which His Glory and Security consists: which happily was no small consideration with His Majesty, when He published His Declaration. And this remains as an additional Security unto His Majesty's Word; and so much the rather, because he hath aspiring Neighbours, who will readily embrace all opportunities of encreasing their Numbers, especially such as bring Wealth, Trade and Manufactories with them: of which they were in hopes, and so blew the Coals of our late Persecution, until His Majesty happily extinguished them by His healing Declaration, and thereby called home many that on great encouragements were setling amongst them.

Though some of the *Roman Catholicks* have asserted that Maxim, That *Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks*; yet God forbid there should not be a Man of Truth found amongst them; or that the Opinion of some should be charged on all: What Principle or Party of Men can then be trusted? Are all the Church of *England* cruel, mercilesse Persecuters, because some of them are so (and that not a few of them neither?) Are they all *Socinians*?

cinians ? And yet they are greatly belied if there are not ſome ſuch amongſt them. Are they all debauched or guilty of Adultery, Atheiſm, Blaſphemy and Murther? And yet there are ſuch to be found in that Church.

Beſides, His Majeſty is not onely willing, but moſt deſirous to put it beyond his power to break the Word and Faith of his Declaration: What can he do (or is not ready and willing to do) to give farther ſatisfaction herein? Let any man rationally propound it, and let his Majeſty refuſe the ſame, before this, or ſuch like ſurmiſes be credited. Is he not willing and deſirous, that an equal Liberty to all, ſhould grow up with, and be twiſted in his Government? Doth he not eſtabliſh his Throne on that Baſis? Hath he made any Limitations or Reſtrictions therein, to exclude any for their Religious Sentiments? Hath he ever ſolicited any man to change his Opinion and become *Roman* Catholique, to encreaſe his Party? Who, or where is the inſtance of this kind? Hath he ever Brow-beaten any man for his Opinion? And *I* am confident he will moſt readily concur with his Parliament on the largeſt and comprehenſiveſt Terms for ſecuring this Liberty: and then it will not be in His, nor any other Man's power to break this Faith, any more than it is to ſubvert the Government it ſelf: Shall all men be truſted on their bare Word? And ſhall His Majeſty's ſolemn repeated Word and Promiſe (that ought to be accounted Sacred) be no ſecurity, tho' real inſtances, ſtrong and moſt weighty Obligations are conjoyned therewith? Where is that Perſon of any Note or Figure in the World that would be ſo uſed for his kindneſs and benignity? The perſons that make theſe, and ſuch-like Suggeſtions, are unworthy of his Majeſty's Goodneſs; nor are there any but Ignorant, Wicked and Malitious Men that will give them Entertainment.

You have other Work incumbent on you, *viz.* Since you have now full Liberty to Worſhip God without any impoſition on your Conſciences, make Conſcience to be found in the conſtant Practice of his Worſhip; live not in the neglect thereof, for that's a Contempt of the Mercy God hath given you: Was the Truth and Religious Worſhip, worth the adventuring all you had for? 'Tis not of *leſs Value* becauſe it now *comes to you at a cheaper Rate*: Do not turn *Scepticks*, nor grow remiſs in *Religion*; that's the way to *loſe* the Bleſſing of your Mercies; but whilſt you have Seaſons and Opportunities, make Conſcience to improve them diligently.

Hearken not to any Councels, nor give way to any Paſſions that tend to ſtir up Quarrels, Contentions, or Diviſions; this will deprive you of this Liberty, or of its *Bleſſing*, to the gratifying of the Devil and your Adverſaries; who for carrying on ſuch deſigns, will take on them new *Shapes*, and deal by you, as the *Samaritans* did with the *Jews*; cover their deſigned Malice with a Cloak of pretended Charity and Friendſhip; your ſtrength is in Concord, and whilſt you mind a *Common Intereſt*, your Enemies cannot hurt you.

Let not an Impoſing Spirit or Principle be found amongſt you; for that's a Perſecution in its kind, as well as Mulcts, Priſons and Blood; but bear with, and forbear each other, notwithſtanding differences in Judgments, or Incitations to the contrary; this is the Spirit of Chriſt, and of his Goſpel, to which you ought to be Reconciled; for you profeſs to walk by Chriſt's Rule, to do to others, as they would be done by; and not to cenſure and judge others for differing ſentiments; which will always be, until we come to the ſame degree and meaſure of Knowledge; a State not to be expected on this ſide Heaven: Till then let Charity (which is the Bond of your Perfection here) knit you together in the purſuit of Holineſs and Concord. Remembring always, That the Bond of Conſcience binds all other *Men* as well as yours binds you: And if it were grievous to you to be oppreſt herein by Enemies; can it be eaſie to another to be in any reſpect ſo oppreſt by you, that ought to be *Friends*? Will you contradict your own profeſſed Principles, to gratifie your Enemies and your Luſts; and grieve your Friends, to the Prejudice of your own Intereſts? When haply the matters contended for, may be ſome obſtruſe Notions, not determinable by the ableſt and moſt learned. Conſider that ſince Conſcience (though erronious) binds both to *Principles* and *Practice*; and acting contrary thereunto, is Sinful: its not poſſible that one Man's Conſcience can be affected or

polluted

polluted simply by another Man's Principle or Practice; otherwise to avoid Sin, we must sin against our own Consciences, or by our Dictates, force other men's Consciences; or sin wilfully to avoid the supposed guilt of another Man's: let therefore that *noble Principle* be maintained, and not in the least infringed.

11. Consider that an *Imposing Spirit*, under which we lately groaned, is the very Spawn and Spirit of Antichrist, the Source of all Impiety and Cruelty; to which appertains the Iniquity and Guilt of all the Blood of the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Millions of Christ's Servants; What Wars, Confusions, and Desolations hath this Spirit always made in the World? Robbing it of its Peace and Tranquility, bringing glorious Churches into Confusion, wasting and impoverishing mighty Monarchs and Kingdoms; when, on the contrary, poor and contemptible *States*, by cherishing this Principle of Liberty of Conscience, have continued their Peace, and grown to greatness of Power and Wealth.

Shall we, that have wofully experienced the verity hereof, approve the contrary, or in any measure contract this Guilt? Is that lawful, commendable, or a Vertue in you, which is hateful, wicked, and abominable in others? Do not justifie your Adversaries in all their Cruelties and Inhumanities, by making and imposing your Understanding and Practice, as a Guide or Measure for other men; for thereby every one becomes a *Dictator*, for what's lawful for one, is lawful for every man. Do not therefore, on pretence of Conscience, multiply nor streighten the Terms of Communion, nor make new Articles of Faith and Communion; let those Christ hath left in his Word suffice, lest out of of blind Zeal you turn, and keep out of the way, those that Christ would have gathered and cherished.

12. Finally, do not study *Revenge*, for that appertains to God; let not your Spirits boyl up into Prejudice against those that have injured you; give no opprobrious provoking Expressions, that's uncomly for Christians; remember your Lord and Master *Reviled not again*, but meekly and patiently endured the *Contradiction of Sinners*; walk as you have him for your Example; pray for your Persecutors, as Christ did; forgive your wrongs; walk holily to God, and righteously to men; live up to your Profession: Hereby you will stop the mouth of *Envy*, and possess the Blessing of this day of your Liberty, and God will continue your Tranquility. *Amen.*

POSTSCRIPT.

IT's not my Province, to enquire into the Times, Occasions, or Reasons on which the Penal Laws *and* Tests *were made, nor whether they are not (especially the* Tests*) against God's Word, the indispensable, immutable, and moral Law of God, common Right, Justice, and Equity, and the Law of the Land (though this will be enquired into, and published;) only this is most apparent, that by the Act by which the* Test *is established, the Sacrament (the most sacred Gospel Ordinance of Christ) is profanely made subservient to Carnal and Secular ends and purposes, and designed to incapacitate His Majesty from having any Servant about him (how useful or necessary soever) but such as either in reality or hypocrisie conforms to the Ceremonies of the Church of* England: *or to reward any other for any Service, though it should be the preservation of his Life, Crown or Kingdom; or to employ them in any Service, how fit or important soever: whereby, in effect, he is rendered to be King only of some part of his Subjects, and haply not of the greatest part of them neither; nor can he advise in Council for his own Preservation, or common Good and Safety of his Kingdom, with any other sort of men, nor dispense the Justice of the Nation by any other hands; whereby also it's in their Power at any time, without comptrole, to impose what Terms and Inconveniencies they please on the King and Kingdom, and to make both His Majesty and all others truckle to them. On this Consideration, many are content to part with all the* Penal Laws, *but struggle for the* Test, *as knowing that it capacitates them at any time to revive again those Laws, or to make worse, if worse can be made, and to subject all men to what state and condition they please: Therefore never account the Nation free, but subjected to an Iron Yoke, and your selves to be lashed with Scorpions for your Consciences, until these* Tests *and* Penal Statutes *are abrogated, and thereby both His Majesty and every body else absolutely freed from them.*

THE END